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THE NEW UNIVERSITY,

AN ORATION

DELIVERED BY ADOLPHUS HILL ELLER,

AT THE

ONE HUNDREDTH ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA,

June 5th, 1895.



THE NEW UNIVERSITY.

For a hundred years on this gracious day our State has gathered here its learning, its beauty and its chivalry; here a University was christened at the constitutional altar, and here dedicated by the public voice; here the Arts have come on the pilgrimage of their hope, and here laid down the trophies of their triumphs; Music has celebrated it in patriotic song; Eloquence has thrown over it the enchanted spell; Society has lighted its features with happiness and love; Architecture has clothed it in stately raiment; and over all Religion has raised its consecrated hands; and for a hundred years the blessings of heaven have borne witness to the pleasure of Him whose name enlightens the world.

Hitherto the men, whose eloquence has lifted them to this lofty place and given them the ear of the State, have had recourse to the history, the traditions, the fond and tender memories of a past, glorious, but forever gone. It was an inspiration that gave us to-day the heir-apparent to "The exhaustless splendors of those glorious days," the most gifted son of our *Alma Mater*, an acknowledged master in the domain of Olympic thought, whose lips have been touched with the honey of Hybla, to fashion into the best expression the best thought of the University of the past, to make this last act in our century-drama a thrilling climax to a lofty theme, and from the furnace of his heart, send the warm and glowing current of his thought throbbing through the world.*

* Hon. Alfred Moore Waddell who had just delivered the oration upon "The Old University".

My stature forbids that I should touch those high and holy things; my subject impels me forward, not backward. I shall enter upon no encomium of the New University—it needs none. It needs friends, not flatterers—work, not words. To-day we forge the glowing link that binds century to century. With a spirit, willing alike to acknowledge blessings won by our ancestors and to win blessings for posterity, with reverent hands and consecrated hearts we have met to place upon those foundations which our fathers laid, stone on stone, thus securing for ourselves that immortality which awaits the builders of this temple. “They wrought mightily to shape vague hopes into great events”. Fresh from King’s Mountain and Guilford and Yorktown, with the mighty passion of liberty throbbing in their hero-hearts, here in the solitude and shadow of a primeval forest they set the beacon of learning. It grew brighter and higher like the rising sun, till the silence and sadness, the dread and darkness of night hovered about it,—but it was not night. From the storm-swept sky it flashed forth at length and the shadows fled and still flee toward the west.

It was a new birth symbolized by baptism in martyr-blood. And with it was born a new civilization. The mighty fabric of feudal society which valor and policy had founded on our rich and ample plains made here its last stand against the all-conquering new-world idea of universal liberty, universal education, and universal opportunity. It went down before the armies of the North, whose numbers and whose martial energy were irresistible.

By the arbitrament of war our constitution was shattered and shaped anew. Most of the old was rejected; but the mandate of 1776 which created this

University came forward, "Clearer, broader, bolder than before". Seven times has it gone back to the people who gave it through the white heat of party passion and seven times unharmed as the Hebrew children, it has stood forth in shining characters upon the enchanted parchment of our Constitution; and there it now stands, and there it will forever stand, as a "Hinderance and a rebuke" to him who would thwart the will of the toiling, ruling myriads of the State.

During that dim, desperate decade, from '65 to '75, like a mother stricken and stripped of her first born, these shadow-haunted halls stood here in mute appeal to heaven, waiting through those sad and desolate years and listening—for the footsteps of the dead. Spartan-like they came at length upon their shields, borne hither by their loving comrades to live forever in marble and in the memory of men.

Doubtful yet undismayed a few men with the pittance of the impoverished, entered upon and persisted in a movement, in the face of ancient prejudice, political indifference and sectarian hinderance to rebuild this University in the hearts of the people. History was not wanting in examples of similar foresight and fortitude. Prussia entered the 19th century with the fell foot of Napoleon on her flag. Out of the wreckage of her ruined redoubts she builded her Universities, and the same century has seen her troops at Sedan, her scholars at every university that encircles the globe, herself the leader of Europe, the intellectual center of the world,—dazzling all eyes with the fresh bloom of her scholarship and culture.

The first care of the ancient state was to educate the ruling class. To that class to-day belongs everyone who bears the image of his Maker and wears the

majesty of freedom. Twin-born with universal suffrage is universal education. The eighteenth century conceived, the nineteenth century brought forth and the twentieth century must rear to manhood this child of the new world, or bury the hopes of free institutions in the virgin soil which gave them birth.

To conserve and to consecrate the truest traditions and yet to break away from narrow channels and time worn paths of the past; to teach a State to think for itself, and feed its own mind and heart with the latest and grandest results of science; to cancel all liens of party, sect and class; to disabuse the idea that higher education is a luxury for an imaginary higher class; and to offer a clear title to equal opportunity to the "Lowly born and gentle bred," to the sons of the mechanic and the millionaire; to bring the University in touch with the people, make it popular and potential; and through normal instruction, lectures, travels, tears and prayers; and by dedicating the best talent to the intellectual awakening of the people; take its place at the head of public education; send forth an army of teachers, print and publish and scatter thick as snow flakes in a winter storm the results of this work,—until the lanterns of heaven grow dim, and the east grows gray and we behold the "Upglowing day from the bosom of the night:"—this problem worked out into life and law is an achievement transcendently greater than that which our gray fathers compassed at the genesis of this state. We know what masters wrought this task—Phillips, Hooper, Mangum, Graves—"Named softly as the household names of those whom God has taken". And what has Kemp P. Battle been to Chapel Hill! More than any other man. With the triple lever of his great head and heart and hand he has uplifted and pushed forward

this state. Time only can compass and consecrate the fulness of his martyr-zeal and patriot-valor.

But the New University, was not, is not accomplished. It is more than the life of one man or of two. New epochs call for new efforts, and the opening day brings fresh energies. The University has but awakened the people,—now to the task of their enlightenment. To fashion existing methods, to meet existing needs; teach that greater than politics and pleasure are purpose and power; give thought its ideas, morals their ideals, life its character; receive the flower of youth, give back the rich fruitage of manhood; make man master of himself, servant to humanity; show wealth its opportunity to do good; give student life its true relation and responsibility to the world; teach the broadest culture and expect the grandest results.

The University idea is broader than sect, section, or party motive,—it is as broad as life and embraces all nature. Such is the spirit of the New University, which the energy and enthusiasm of our new president has quickened into animation and to ardor. In this thrill of modern learning, this mighty torrent of swelling thought, he has had the presence and the boldness to breast its wave. By embodying the spirit of the New South, by re-organization, by expansion, by athletics, by societies, by co-operation, by endowment, by appeals to the people, by every legitimate means of culture and growth, and by selection of the fittest of all methods, and adaptation to the wants of North Carolina, he has in this the fourth year of his administration, distanced the high record of the past and made this, what it never was before, a University of the people, by the people and for the people. The New University creates and is itself created by the uprising tide of our prosperity. Already it holds a commanding

place in the south-east of our republic. Let the munificence of the public, let private philanthropy unfetter the holy ambition of our enlightened leader and he shall not lay down his task till we have here the Harvard of the South.

The real University has many types—it has but one spirit. It was kindled in the twelfth century at St. Genevieve, where Abelard taught that “Authority is derived from reason.” Men started up and enquired; and thrilled by the throb of liberated thought, followed him in banishment to the wilderness, and there about his stubble-built oratory founded a republic of liberty and letters. The past rose up and instructed men with the tongues of Cicero and Homer. The master-minds which had enlightened one age broke the darkness of another; fervent hearts called for an open Bible, and in the mirror of revelation and reason man beheld in his own image the likeness of his God. The ideal was found. To clothe man with liberty and learning and to crown him with religion has from that day till our own given to the University its aim and its importance.

The old world school admitted the citizen to this high estate; the new world school admits all, not degrading the citizen but ennobling the man,—a principle which has expanded day by day and century by century since Columbus from his frail caravel looked out upon a continent fruitful of all things, save only of tyranny and oppression.

The stern Puritan, the faithful Covenanter, the peace-loving Friend following the career of William Penn, the earnest simple souls who shared with Roger Williams faith in absolute soul-freedom, and they who gazed at John Wesley “As men gaze at a star,” rushed to these shores, and each built its University upon

the foundation of its creed. They little knew, and without a prophet's foresight could not have known, that a *free state* could found and foster a system of education upon the surest support, the widest wisdom, and the truest toleration. But the years were full of wisdom suited to the times.

Of the thirteen original states but six entered the Union with the University mandate in their constitutions. North Carolina, abreast with Pennsylvania, led the way. Since 1790 every State has followed in their wake. Here again in 1825 is found the first statute establishing state supervision, and asserting state control over elementary education. "Noble beginnings in the right direction!" A precedent already passed into fundamental law and followed by the unbroken line of forty-five American States, as they sweep across this spreading republic, planting universal education in the fresh fields of freedom under the clear sky of peace, where in God's appointed time must come to fullness and to ripeness the best civilization of this earth.

The history of nations is marked by revolutions, churches by reformations, subject alike to the same divine law of change and progress. At the founding of this commonwealth the church yielded a ready assent to state support and state control of *higher* education. To the family and to itself belonged the rest. Before the meridian of the first century had been reached the burden of lower education was laid upon the strong arm of the mother state and her right to the higher disputed! 'Tis the whim of the child; no wise parent will heed it. We are advancing to a higher view of the state and its functions and duties. Public sentiment is steadily and sturdily settling down to the conviction that the methods and measures of the past have been outgrown, that the irregular, the tem-

porary, the local must give way to the regular, the permanent, the universal—that there should be, that there *must* be a unity, a sequence, an organized connection between the lowest and the highest. And when the sovereign people awake to full consciousness that the highest and best in education is, in this way and this way only, opened to them, they will *have* it so. Upon this true historic basis they will build, where the aristocracy of scholars shall serve the democracy of workers, where independence of thought and expression shall expand and tower beyond and above the narrow confines of class and creed, where the truest expression of the religion of the people shall dwell and be heard, where faith and reason shall reflect along the pathway of our race the true light that comes direct from the throne of God.

The progress of North Carolina towards this ideal has been slow, but, thank God, it has been substantial and true. If I may point you to an example with which I am most familiar, to the city of Winston, which of all our cities I know best and love best, you will look upon a scene in which are blended the power of progress and the poetry of pathos. The old Academy, once vocal with the light laughter of youth, now surrendered to the manufacturer, and the boys' and girls' play grounds given over to the printing house and the church. But away to the north and the east and the west, crowning each swelling hill-top, stand the stately structures of her public graded schools, free to all—freest to the humblest—stretching from the Kindergarten to the University a ladder of learning, and leading a rising generation up its shining rounds to a clearer view and a wider vision of man's dread destiny and duty.

The awful waste of splendid human faculties de-

mands that some such unity and system shall make its way to the town, the hamlet and the county. Eternal change and progress cannot long be held and hindered by the affections of successive generations for the old. The law of our nature has decreed it—as well resist the relentless, heedless pitiless winds which wrestle with the weather-worn bark on the great deep without.

Dare we leave to charity and to chance what our Constitution commands and the wisdom and the wants of the age compel? “Is it right, is it expedient, is it possible,” for the State to provide the highest as well as the lowest in education? Napoleon Bonaparte designed this system for France, Alexander Hamilton engrafted it upon the constitution of New York, Thomas Jefferson planted it securely in the commonwealth of Virginia, Prince Bismarck said, “It is the one thing upon which we can afford to be lavish.” The four greatest intellects of two continents and two centuries, representing the monarchical, the imperial, the republican, the democratic schools of thought—higher authority must come through revelation. ‘Tis a time for the revolutionary voice of Patrick Henry to dispel the doubts and fears, put to shame the cowardice and move to action a people great and brave. “They tell us that we are weak, unable to cope with so formidable” a problem. “But when shall we be stronger?” Will it be the next year or the next century, will it be when this stronghold of learning is deserted? Will it be when generations of untutored men have worn the chains of ignorance from the cradle to the grave? “Sir, we are not weak, if we make the proper use of those means which the God of Nature has placed into our power”. Two millions of people guided by the light of liberty and learning, and sustained by the resources of such a State as that

which we possess, are equal to any task which destiny and duty have set before them. Besides, sir, the State is not to fight this battle alone. The spirit of that lowly, lofty Teacher which sustained Paul at the Areopagus, christianized the pagan Greek and Roman, and the barbarous Gaul and Teuton, has moulded modern law and stimulated modern institutions. Christianity is the influence of Christ. Blackstone and Webster, Kent and Storey have pronounced it a part of our common law. It came not to destroy but to save. It influences every function of government, it usurps none. By scattering the huddling classes and teaching the brotherhood of man, capital has been clothed with a sacred trust and philanthropy has come into the world. Beautiful and sublime is philanthropy in all of its forms, beautiful those benefactions, though designed to write our creed on other men's souls, which have sown the soil with sectarian schools. But more beautiful and more sublime is that form of philanthropy which gives like God gives the sun-shine. No name is so certain to be spoken, no name so sweet to the lips of fame, no name so independent of monumental marble, as the name of him who by generous giving has touched the great heart of mankind. It was not until Mark Antony, that masterful mover of multitudes, had reached the last clause of Cæsar's will, and above the din of the forum, shouted:

"To every Roman Citizen he *Gives*,
 To every several man seventy-five drachmas,
 His private arbors and new planted orchards on this side Tiber,"

it was not till he had struck this master chord of the human breast that he roused the Roman rabble to relentless revenge. When Alexander the Great died, his faithful generals consumed two years in starting his funeral car laden with rich trappings of the orient

and drawn by sixty steeds of stainless white from the Euphrates to the Nile. The solemn pageant made its way amid men with hearts as barren and eyes as dry as the sand-drifted deserts over which it passed,—evoking no cry save from the startled slave who asked for the name of his new master. When George Peabody died, the British Empire and the American Republic sent the proudest battle ships and flag ships of their great navies to bear his sarcophagus in triumph across the sea—fit emblem of his Apotheosis, when his great soul sailed away on an ocean of tears. His philanthropy had astonished the world, and his death touched to tenderness and to tears the great heart of humanity, and the English speaking people stood uncovered in awful veneration at his bier. By the philanthropy of a few self-sacrificing men and women, poor in purse but rich in human sympathy and by the munificence of the public, we have *here* the true foundations of a higher learning. In spirit a University always; but in arts and implements the century's dawn found it a school, the meridian marked it a college, the setting sun casts its mantle of glowing light upon a *University*, strong in its deep-rooted traditions and affections, vital with new life, vigorous in its new growth. It is the true type, it is the result of growth under the latest and best husbandry. It is the American stock ingrafted with the German scion, giving the depth of German thought the breadth of American culture, and scattering its rich fruitage not beyond the people but amongst the people; teaching the few, enlightening the many; smiting the rock and sending from the mountain side to the plain level below a fountain of knowledge pure and bright as sparkling water. Its power is already felt under every school house that “Nestles in our happy valleys and crowns

our swelling hills”.

Shall it endure? I appeal to the alumni, you who adorn the executive chair, the senate hall, the desk, the field, the forum, the market, the ermine and the gown,—passing from triumph to triumph, by force of the intellectual prowess which draws its inspiration from her breast and stamping her impress upon all that is lofty in thought, courageous in action, sublime in devotion.

I appeal to the patriotic citizens, burdened by an industrial domination and debased by an intellectual domination of the North, who have paid your quota of the five millions of dollars sent annually from the South to help Northern schools perpetuate your subjection to their thought, who pay for education a sum if utilized and kept at home would give us a University and a system of schools equal to the best in New England, superior to the best in the New South.

I appeal to North Carolina, and ask if this University shall endure? You may disown your child, you may strike her down, but when you do, you strike down the one that has written your name the highest,—the one that loves you best.

But this is no time for foreboding. A political revolution has just swept over our State. Three currents of political thought diverging and seeking opposite poles till they touched the head and heart of the people’s schools, when one time at least they rushed together in warm embrace. It is secure! Local jealousy and sectarian strife may hock at and deride it, blind fanaticism and time-serving demagogary may mock and menace its career, but the people will not be deceived. Their eyes are turned with hope and their ears with faith to George T. Winston whom the public voice has hailed the most fit to lead forth the best

thought of the nineteenth century to another and a more forward age. Trusting to him to seize this opportunity of the ages, to take the forward step upon the smooth highway of triumphant civilization over which the New South—"Catching the gleam that died on our father's swords" to light up the path-way of their sons, nerved by necessity, pushed on by poverty, bouyant with the inspiration of hope which none but the young and poor can feel, dowered by the discipline of a Titanic struggle, and fired by faith in the dynamic energies of her new growth—shall press forward and onward until the achievements of the past are eclipsed by the miracles of the future and the darkness of war and waste shall burst into the white splendors of perpetual peace and power.

It is this new growth, this truly American organism, this ideal head and heart of the new life of the people, this spirit of the New University, "That is worthy to lead forth into expression this grand new life of the western world whose pulsations are richer with possibilities than those of ancient Greece and Rome". Their fabled charioteer of the sun is not unlike the enlightened man of our thrilling day—enthroned on the car of progress with the lines of science in his hands, guiding the rushing winds as they carry him from continent to continent, goading the tireless steam as it plows the ocean and the land, and with the lightning lash dashing his commands around the world.

Standing here between the two grandest centuries of all time, upon the cap stone of the Old University, upon the portals of the New, the heirs of one great event, the witnesses of another, bivouaced by the shining path-way of our history to hear the century roll-call of names though whose white lips memory breaths an eloquent echo of virtue and valor, let us drink deep

the inspiration of this great day. And for the liberty we love, the learning we honor, the religion we hallow, let us go forward till the ideals of our fathers are realized; till the prayers of the old and the hopes of the young are fulfilled; till all science, all art, all truth—nurselings of the fuller civilization—are nourished at her breast; till the radius of her light is pushed across the dim border land of finite matter and infinite mind; till the jargon of nations, the raillery of races, the war of creeds are stilled—and the pall of ignorance is lifted up, and light covers the land like a mantle.



